

2020

Autumn Harvest

MAGAZINE

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The Harvest is on...

More than 73,000 acres – nearly a quarter of all land – in Macomb County is used for agriculture purposes.

Nearly \$79 million in products were sold in 2017 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

With more than 400 active farms, the county is fully involved in all aspects of the farm-to-table process.

Food products grown and manufactured in Macomb County are routinely sold to both wholesalers and retailers for distribution and have value added through businesses primarily engaged in baking, processing and packaging. Michigan's climate and geography make it home to the second most diverse state in the United States for crop production.

Enjoy this guide's tribute to our rich agricultural heritage.

—Lawrence Sobczak
Publisher

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Celebrating the History of the Harvest

BY LARRY SOBCHAK, EDITOR

Northern Macomb County has a long history of modern agriculture.

The earliest non-native settlers were farmers from New England seeking new opportunities in the early 19th century.

Local legend has it that Michael Bowerman built a cabin two miles south of what would become Romeo in 1813.

The legend continues that Bowerman carried a small number of peach pits from his father's farm in New York, introducing the popular fruit to Macomb County.

Bowerman, who was a War of 1812 veteran, was later

able to claim the land where his cabin sat in payment for his service to his country and it eventually became Westview Orchards.

Other farmers in the 19th century enjoyed so much success that they decided to organize the Armada Fair in 1872 to celebrate their bounty.

The Armada Fair has become one of the longest-running fairs in the state.

The fair was originally a three-day harvest festival in October to celebrate the end of the farming season.

Since then, the fair has grown into a week-long event that now takes place during the third week of August.

Meanwhile, west of Armada, it was not until 1880

that Michael Bowerman's son, Byron, planted 10 acres of small peach trees which gave Romeo and northern Macomb County's orchard industry a commercial start.

The sixth generation descendants of Michael Bowerman still operate Westview Orchard to this day.

Albert G. Griggs, of Rochester, made a number of trips to Romeo and surrounding territory in 1916 and in doing so found out from Byron Bowerman and William Bristol that they had more consistent peach crops in Romeo's vicinity than was to be had in other peach growing districts of the state.

This was on account of the rolling country. Peaches growing in orchards on the hill ridges mitigated the danger of frost. The hills also had heavier soil which helped prolonged the life of the trees to 15 years compared to seven to ten years in other sections of the state.

Albert G. Griggs came to Romeo in 1916 and started the Mountain View Orchards near 32 Mile and Campground roads, planting 160 acres to peaches.

Later, Griggs and his son Perry planted an additional 110 acres, 60 of which they sold for suburban homesites to five families who operated a company known as Romeo Community Orchards.

D. I. Oliver of Pontiac also became interested and in 1918 started the Romeo Orchards Co. by initially planting 160 acres and later adding 80 more acres.

Mr. G. W. Faulman of Detroit came to Romeo in 1923 and established the Hillcrest Orchards planting 40 acres at that time and later increased the orchard by the addition of 145 acres.

E. T. Strong, Pres. of the Buick Motor Car Company, started the East View Farm Orchards in 1926 with 10 acres, later adding 40 acres more. East View Farm Orchards were located along Van Dyke Avenue, south of 30 Mile Road.

The Edward F. Fisher Farms were started by Edward F. Fisher of "Fisher Body" fame. This enormous farm



PHOTO BY LARRY SOBCZAK



PHOTO BY LARRY SOBCHAK

and orchard is now the site of Ford Motor Company's Michigan Proving Grounds in Bruce Township.

The 1931 Peach Festival program listed many other orchards in and around Romeo such as: Crissman Orchards in Rochester, Holly Ridge Fruit Farm, Hidden Lake Orchards, Ingleside Fruit Farm, Rush Bros. Orchards, Stoney Creek Orchards, L. C. Scott Fruit Farm, Verellen Bros., Carter's Orchards in Armada, Ed Eckley Orchards, Blackmore Orchards in Goodison, Juengel Bros. in Rochester) and Walter Bailey.

The program reported that between the larger orchards and many other smaller growers that approximately 2,000 acres of peaches orchards with an annual yield of 200,000 bushels were grown in the county.

The guide said that between 1915 and 1930, there was never a crop failure.

Growers such as the Verellen Brothers, which later became known as Verellens Orchard and Cider Mill, took advantage of an ever-increasing motoring public by opening a roadside stand in 1920 along Van Dyke Avenue after it was designated as one of the earliest state highways, M-53.

Westview followed in 1930 by opening their roadside stand after they discovered the Eastern Market in Detroit was flooded with a bumper crop of peaches and they could not sell their crop there.

The interurban streetcar, which ran from Imlay City to Detroit, passed by a string of roadside stands south of Romeo, and contributed to the sellers' potential customer base.

Area orchard growers convinced Romeo Village President Edward Jacob, also a prominent attorney, to investigate creating a festival to promote their crops.

Jacob travelled to the Michigan Cherry Festival in 1931 and decided to model a similar festival around peaches in Romeo the same year with the help of the growers.

According to David McLaughlin's 2005 book "The



PHOTO BY LARRY SOBCZAK

Romeo Peach Festival,” the Rotary Club was the only service club involved in organizing the festival. The Village of Romeo did not contribute to the festival but later set aside a fund to help with some of the cost.

There were no festivals between 1942 and 1945 due to World War II.

In 1946, the “pick-your-own” farm concept was introduced by Blake Farms in Armada and spread throughout the area.

The concept has proven so successful that Blake’s has expanded their operation to three separate locations with more than 500 acres of orchard and farmland. Many other farmers and orchard owners followed their lead.

In 1951, according to McLaughlin, the Romeo Lions Club agreed to help support the Peach Festival and made some changes.

The carnival was moved in 1956 to its present-

day location at the end of East Washington Street in Romeo.

Beginning in the 1960s, area growers felt the pressures of suburbanization as well as downward price pressure from massive corporate-owned orchards and farms in the western U.S. and many have closed.

The stretch of Van Dyke Avenue between 29 Mile and 31 Mile roads, once one of the densest stretches of roadsides stands, is down to two—Westview and Verellens. Disappearing to the annals of history since the 1970s are East View, Southview, Graubner’s, Bowerman’s and Rapp’s.

A new generation has appeared to take the place of the retired farm and orchard operations including honey growers, handmade pies bakeries and lavender growers as well as produce farmers, farm fresh dairies and Christmas tree growers. See page 20 and 21 for a listing.



1946 Miss Romeo Shirley Wiers

Peach Queens through the years...



Since 1931, 85 young women have served as Peach Queen and as ambassadors to northern Macomb County's agricultural heritage. The women have travelled throughout the state and the region promoting the peach crop. This collection of photos was assembled by Romeo resident Betty Bucsek and now resides at the Romeo Community Archive.

1931
*The first
Romeo Peach
Festival Queen*
Virginia Allor
Mt. Clemens



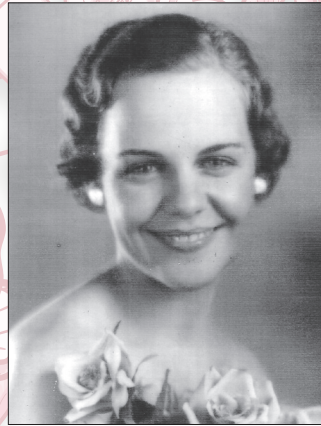
1931 - 1939



1932
Helen Cheeseman
Clarkston



1933
Lucille Plassey
Rochester



1934
Ruth Sheardy
Lake Orion



1935
Marion Laphis
Port Huron



1936
Mozelle Cravens
Flint



1937
Lois Beal
Romeo



1938
Frances Leithauser
Port Huron



1939
Nancy Barber
Romeo

1940 - 1949



1940
Mary Carleton
St. Clair

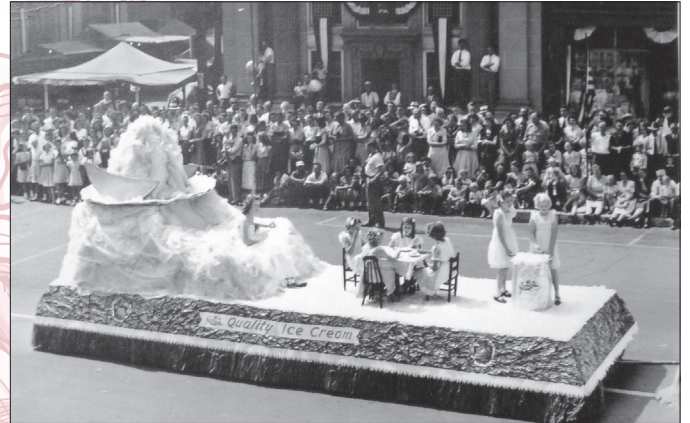


1941
Margaret Emory
South Lyon

The Peach Festival was not held in 1942, 1943, 1944 and 1945 due to World War II. There were no Peach Queens those years.



1947 Rotary float



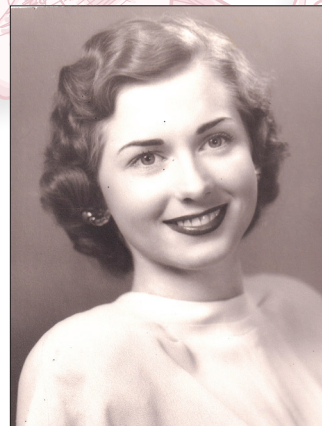
1948 parade



1946
Doris Sternberg
Oxford



1947
Anna Mae Blue
St. Clair Shores



1948
Bernice Maddox
Flint



1949
Barbara Greene
Pontiac

1950 - 1959



1950
Rosemary Murray
Pontiac



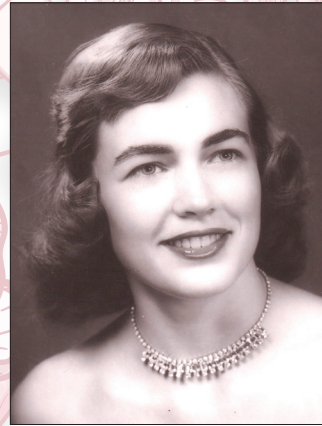
1951
JoAnn Calvert
Lapeer



1952
Diona Coval
Utica



1953
Nancy Seeman
Utica



1954
Karen Hoff
Pontiac



1955
Nancy Kovack
Flint



1956
Ann Zemke
Armada



1957
Carol Hall
Mt. Clemens



1958
Bonita Brookshear
Waterford Township



1959
Lorelei Hoxie
Armada

1960 - 1969



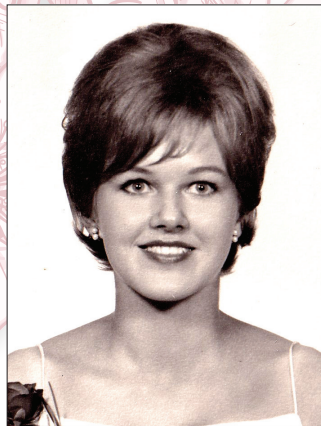
1960
JoEllen Schafer
Rochester



1961
Dorothy Jean Bilbrey
Flint



1962
Wallyne Ragel
Roseville



1963
Susan Pill
Pontiac



1964
Pam Cumming
Romeo



1965
Tjwana Jean Holley
Utica



1966
Armella Ragel
Roseville



1967
Nancy Raisanen
East Detroit



1968
Donna Jean Christenson
Flint



1969
Peggy Lynn Buell
Roseville

1970 - 1979



1970
Karen Lloyd
Beaverton



1971
Christine Clark
St. Clair Shores



1972
Gail McCauley
Sterling Heights



1973
Margaret Smith
Three Rivers



1974
Pamela Perfili
Roseville



1975
Colleen Downey
St. Clair Shores



1976
Marie Berg
Utica



1977
Linda Golla
Mt. Clemens



1978
Diane Gola
Clinton Township



1979
Tammy DeBano
Roseville

1980 - 1989



1980
Robin Riss
Sterling Heights



1981
Chris Righi
Sterling Heights



1982
Laura Amon
Romeo



1983
Christine Beauchamp
Armada



1984
Lorry Purzin
Warren



1985
Michele Young
East Detroit



1986
Kimberly Long
Shelby Township



1987
Cathy Stone
Washington Township



1988
Diana Bolton
Romeo



1989
Christina Mularczyk
Washington Township

1990 - 1999



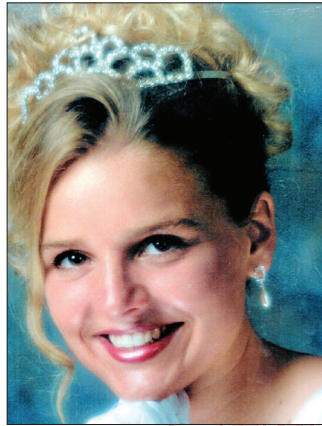
1990
Jennifer Gondert
Romeo



1991
Ginger Besasparis



1992
Mary Coutsos
Washington Township



1993
Jennifer Wiktor



1994
Michelle Perrini



1995
Melissa Bara



1996
Denise Zayti
Roseville



1997
Sherilynn Russell
Warren



1998
Heather Hampton
Armada



1999
Rebecca Malczyk
Shelby Township

2000 - 2009



2000
Lindsay Shotwell
Shelby Township



2001
Jessica Stephens
Romeo



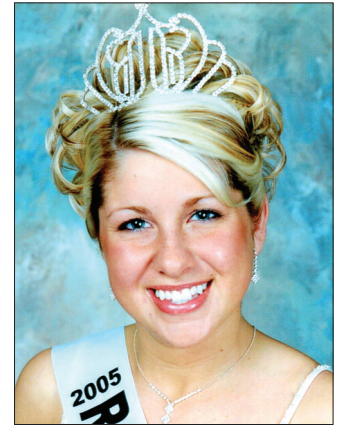
2002
Ashleigh Beadle
Washington Township



2003
Kimberly Lavelly
Richmond



2004
Fallon Bojanowski
Washington Township



2005
Jessica Foltz
Washington Township



2006
Lauren Kloock
Romeo



2007
Sheena Lewandowski
Romeo



2008
Corney Spiegel
Romeo



2009
Kathleen Cieslik
Romeo

2010 - 2019



2010
Makenna Doyle
Romeo



2011
Emily Simonetti
Washington Township



2012
Lisa Polley
Romeo



2013
Sarah Phillips
Romeo



2014
Kaitlyn Krimmel
Washington Township



2015
Mianna Gonczar
Romeo



2016
Emilee Wichtner
Washington Township



2017
Lily Venditti
Washington Township

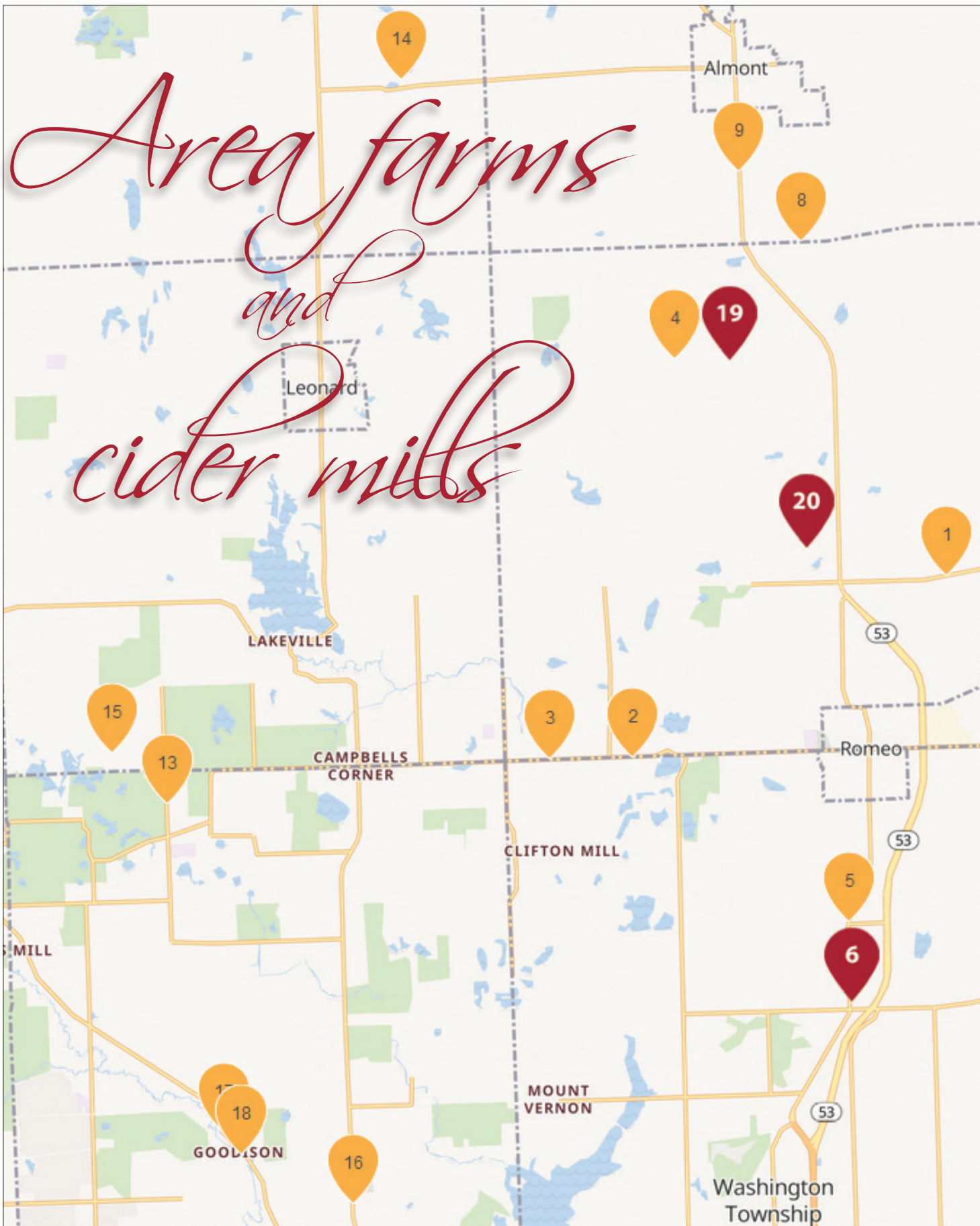


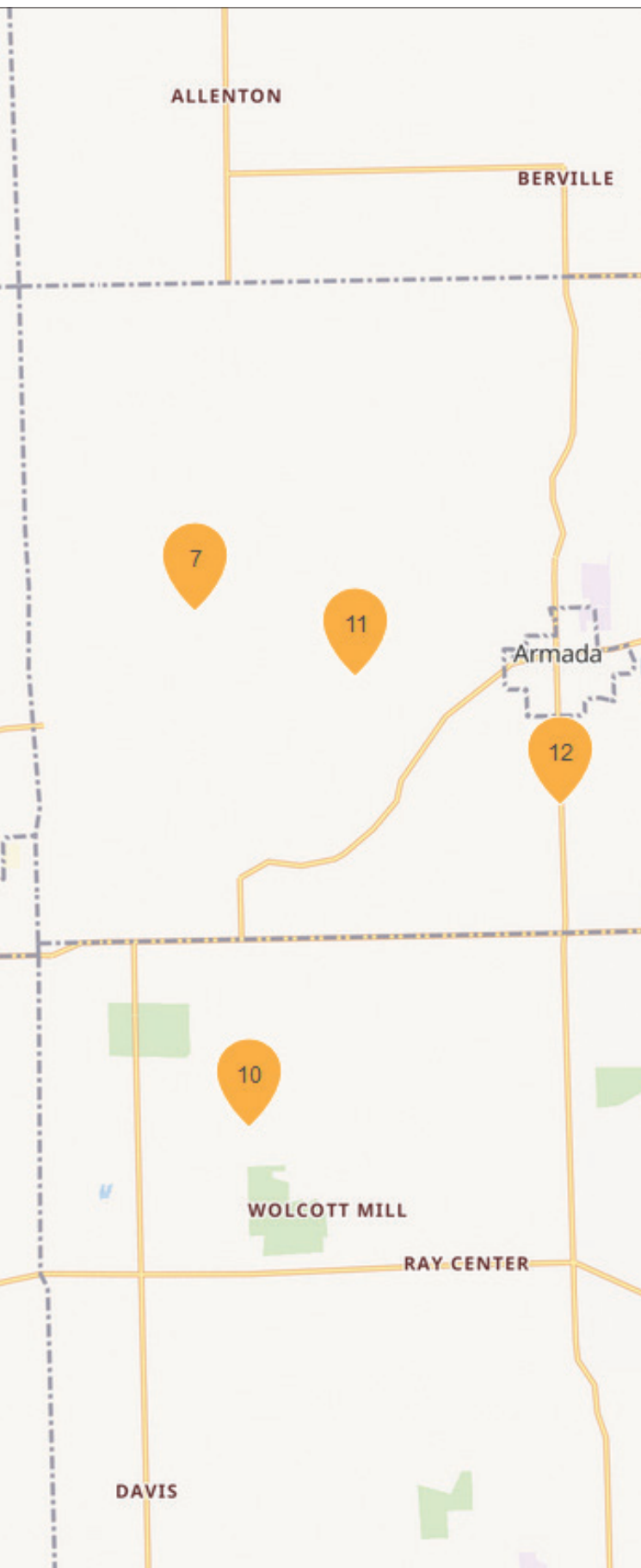
2018
Samantha Bartolotta
Washington Township



2019
Isabel Wallace
Washington Township

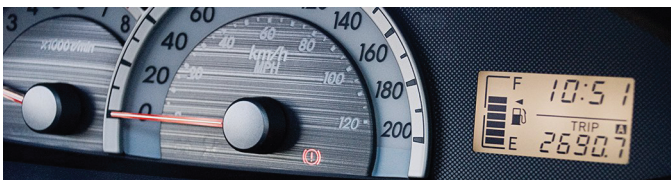
Area farms and cider mills





1. Gabriel's Garden Lavender and Herbs, 14000 34 Mile Road, Romeo.
2. Miller's Big Red Apple Orchard, 4900 West 32 Mile Road, Washington Township.
3. Stony Creek Orchard and Cider Mill, 2961 West 32 Mile Road, Bruce Township.
4. Hy's Cider Mill, 6350 37 Mile Road, Bruce Township.
5. Westview Orchards, Adventure Farm and Winery, 65075 Van Dyke Avenue, Washington Township.
6. **Verellen Orchards and Cider Mill, 63260 Van Dyke Avenue, Washington Township. This farm recently celebrated 100 years of operation and it is open year-round. 586-752-2989. www.verellenorchards.com.**
7. Blake's Orchard and Cider Mill, 17985 Armada Center Road, Armada.
8. Brookwood Fruit Farm, 7845 Bordman Road, Almont.
9. Blake's Almont Orchard, 5600 Van Dyke Road, Almont.
10. **Wolcott Mill Metropark Farm Center, 65775 Wolcott Road, Ray Township.**
11. Sheepy Hollow Farm, 73910 Coon Creek Road, Armada.
12. **Blake's Big Apple, 71485 North Avenue, Armada.**
13. Addison-Oaks Christmas Tree Farm, 355 Lake George Road, Oakland Township.
14. Honeyflow Farm, 4939 Mill Road, Dryden Township.
15. Upland Hills Farm, 481 Lake George Rd, Addison Township.
16. Rochester Cider Mill, 5125 North Rochester Road, Oakland Township.
17. Goodison Cider Mill, 4295 Orion Road, Oakland Township.
18. Paint Creek Cider Mill, 4480 Orion Road, Oakland Township.
19. **Mike and Ruth's Hill Top Farm. Homemade pies made from in-season fruit from the orchard. 7320 37 Mile Road, Bruce Township. 810-343-3759.**
20. **Northern Farm Market. Wide variety of locally grown fruits, vegetables and other farm products. 74865 Van Dyke Road, Bruce Township. 586-531-2439. www.northernfarmmarketllc.com.**

Bold indicates featured businesses. Source: Michigan.org



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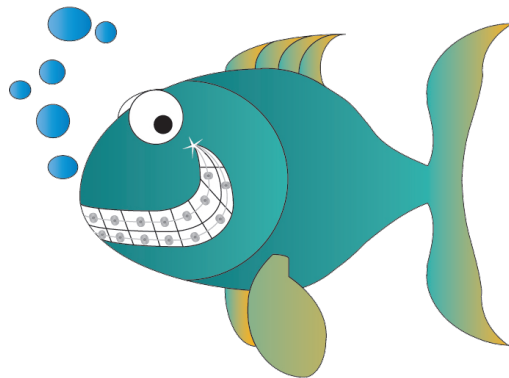


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Enjoy seasonal favorites with
Fall comfort foods

While this autumn season will likely look different than years past, wholesome meals celebrating fall flavors provide something to look forward to. Eating foods like walnuts, colorful fruits and vegetables, and whole grains can be a solution for improving overall well-being in an enjoyable, delicious way.

Along with fall favorites like root vegetables, Brussel sprouts, apples and cranberries, kitchen staples like walnuts also have their own prime season. Walnuts harvested during autumn from the

fertile soils of California supply more than 99% of walnuts in the U.S. and more than half of the world's walnut trade.

Each harvest produces enough walnuts for you to enjoy the tasty and nutrient rich benefits year-round. Pro tip: Storing them in the fridge or freezer maintains freshness longer.

Welcome the flavors of fall with this Apple Pear Walnut Crisp and Pumpkin Walnut Sage Risotto, and find more recipes to celebrate the season at walnuts.org/fall-favorites.

Apple Pear Walnut Crisp

Total time: 1 hour, 5 minutes

Servings: 4

Walnut Crisp Topping:

1 1/2 cups California walnuts, divided

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

1/3 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup quick-cooking oats

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/2 cup butter, chilled and sliced into 1-tablespoon pieces

Apple Pear Filling:

3 Granny Smith apples, peeled and sliced into
1/4-inch slices

2 D'Anjou pears, peeled and sliced into
1/4-inch slices

1/2 cup granulated sugar

2 tablespoons cornstarch

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon lemon juice

ice cream (optional)

caramel sauce (optional)

To make walnut crisp topping: In food processor, pulse 1 cup walnuts until finely ground.

In small bowl, combine ground walnuts, flour, brown sugar, oats and cinnamon. Cut butter into mixture until coarse crumb forms.

Coarsely chop remaining walnuts and stir into crumb mixture until incorporated. Set aside.

To make apple pear filling: Preheat oven to 350 F.

In bowl, toss apples, pears, sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, salt and lemon juice.

Place fruit mixture in bottom of 10-inch cast-iron pan or baking dish.

Sprinkle walnut crisp topping mixture over fruit.

Bake 45 minutes, or until fruit mixture is hot and bubbly and topping is golden brown.

Top with ice cream and caramel sauce, if desired.





Pumpkin Walnut Sage Risotto

Total time: 30 minutes

Servings: 6

Risotto:

6 cups vegetable stock

1/4 cup olive oil

1/2 large yellow onion, finely diced

1 1/2 cups Arborio rice

1 cup pumpkin puree

1/4 cup grated pecorino cheese

Walnut Sage Pesto:

2 cloves fresh garlic

1 cup California walnuts

1/2 cup fresh sage leaves, plus additional for garnish, if desired

1/2 cup grated pecorino cheese, plus additional for garnish, if desired

2 tablespoons olive oil

kosher salt, to taste

black pepper, to taste

To make risotto: In medium pot over medium-low heat, heat vegetable stock.

In large, heavy pot over medium heat, heat olive oil. Add onion and cook, stirring often, 5 minutes, or until soft.

Add rice and cook, stirring often, 2-3 minutes until rice is translucent except for white center.

Add hot stock 1 cup at a time, stirring frequently. As stock is absorbed, add another cup. Continue until all stock has been incorporated and rice is cooked al dente, about 20 minutes. Stir in pumpkin and cheese.

To make walnut sage pesto: In bowl of food processor, combine garlic and walnuts; pulse until minced. Add 1/2 cup sage leaves, 1/2 cup cheese and olive oil; pulse until coarse pesto forms. Season with salt, to taste.

In final few minutes, add 1/2 cup walnut sage pesto to risotto, stirring until well incorporated. Season with kosher salt and black pepper, to taste. Garnish with remaining pesto, cheese and fresh sage, if desired.

Peach Pie

Cook time: 45 minutes Prep time: 30 minutes

Servings: 8-10

Ingredients:

3/4 cup sugar, plus 2 tablespoons for top

1/3 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 tsp cinnamon

6 cup fresh peaches, peeled and sliced

1 pkg refrigerated pastry for double-crust pie

1 Tbsp butter

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Stir together 3/4 cup sugar, flour, and cinnamon in large bowl. Add peaches and gently toss to coat.

Place one pastry in a 9-inch pie plate; dot pastry with butter. Add peach mixture. Cover with top crust. Cut slits in the top, seal, and crimp edges. Sprinkle top with remaining 2 tablespoons of sugar.

Cover edge of pie and bake 45 minutes or until crust is brown and juice begins to bubble. Remove foil for the last 15 minutes of baking.



Fresh Peach Cobbler

This dessert is easy to make, just don't make the mistake of using more peaches than called for or you'll really have a mess in your oven. Wonderful served warm with vanilla or butter pecan ice cream.

Cook time: 45 minutes Prep time: 20 minutes

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

8 large peaches, peeled, halved and sliced
(cling free make it easier)

3 cup sugar, divided

1/2 tsp cinnamon

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted

2 cup flour

4 tsp baking powder

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp cinnamon

2 tsp vanilla

1 1/2 cup milk

(Continued on next page)





Directions:

In large bowl, toss peaches, 1/2 tsp. cinnamon, and 1 1/2 cups of the sugar. Set aside.

Melt butter into a 13x9 glass baking dish or pan. Use the microwave for glass dish, oven for metal pan. (Or you can melt it in a glass measuring cup and pour it into the pan.)

In another large bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, salt, 1/2

tsp. cinnamon, and 1 1/2 cups sugar until mixed. Stir in milk and vanilla til just combined. Don't over mix.

Pour batter slowly over butter evenly. Top the batter evenly with peach slices. Drizzle any leftover sugar mixture over peaches.

Bake at 375 degrees for 45-50 minutes until top is done. This recipe can be halved and make in an 8" square baking dish. Baking time and temperature is the same.



THREE LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU BETTER



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22960 W. Main Street
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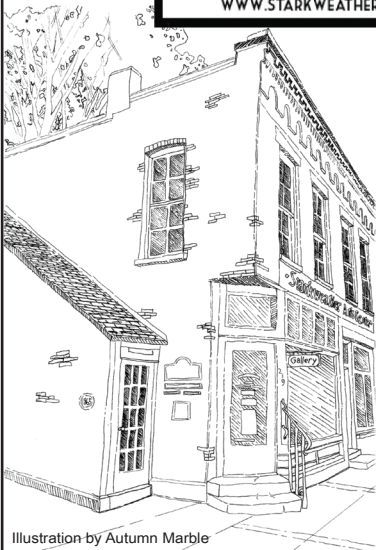


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